not been clearly indicated in the postal seal or mostly the seal is missing on postal letters;

(b) whether the Government are aware that there are delays in the prompt delivery of postal letters to the addresses; and

(c) if so, the step the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Postal Seals and Stamps invariably bear the place and date of the office of posting/ delivery. However, complaints are occasionally received about non-affixing or illegible affixing of Postal Seals on Postal articles.

(b) The Postal articles are generallly delivered to the addressees on time. However, occasional delays in delivery of mail may occur due to unforseen transportation problems natural calamities, inadequacy of delivery staff, sudden and exceptionally heavy volume of mails like Corporate mail and Greeting mails etc.

(c) (i) Suitable instructions are issued from time to time to ensure proper stamping of mails. Surprise checks are made by the Senior Officers and corrective measured are taken as deemed necessary.

(ii) The transmission and delivery of mails is constantly monitored at various levels in the field and at the Headquarters also. Remedial steps are taken to curb deficiencies, wherever noticed.

Restriction of Companies

2493. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Department of Telecommunications has decided to restrict the number of companies with whom orders can be placed for telecom equipment instead of distributing the contracts to all the bidders as has been earlier practice;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the names of the restricted companies?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following are the reasons:

(1) To obtain competitive and reasonable prices against tenders.

(2) To distribute the tendered quantity optimally so that orders are commercially viable both for the supplier and the purchaser i.e. Department of Telecom.

(3) The number of suppliers to be selected is invariably indicated in the bid documents for transparency in the procurement process.

(c) Only the number of companies is restricted. Restriction is not based on names. The number varies from tender to tender.

[Translation]

Introduction of Shatabdi Express Train Between Delhi and Amritsar

2494. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce one more Shatabdi Express Train between Delhi and Amritsar;

(b) whether an announcement was made by the Prime Minister in this regard during his Punjab tour; and

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It has been decided to introduce a reverse Shatabdi Express between New Delhi and Amritsar from 02.10.97.

Renewable Energy Centres

2495. SHRI D.P. YADAV : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the areas in Uttar Pradesh where the Government have set up renewable energy centres;

(b) the details of the projects of non-conventional energy sources which are proposed to be set up in Uttar Pradesh through Panchayats; and

(c) the details of the estimated annual expenditure thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) One Regional Training-cum R&D Centre under Integrated Rural Energy Programme, at Chinhat, Lucknow and two Biomass Production Research Centres located at National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow and Garhal University, Srinagar respectively, have been set up with financial support from the Ministry.

(b) and (c) State Governments have been advised to involve the Panchayats in the implementation of National Programme on Improved Chulha. In turn, State Government or Uttar Pradesh has issued suitable instructions to District and Block Nodal Offices in this regard. An expenditure of